

Message Text

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64

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 EA-07 NEA-10 ISO-00 AGR-05 IO-11

COME-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 AID-05 TRSE-00 STR-04

L-03 /078 W

----- 050636

R 171730Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9937

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: FAO, EAGR, EPAP

SUBJECT: TEA -- COMMONWEALTH MEETING ON TEA FAILS TO
REACH AGREEMENT

REF: A) LONDON 1846

B) LONDON 19521

1. THE COMMONWEALTH MEETING ON TEA, HELD IN LONDON
MARCH 8-10 AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE UK, FAILED TO REACH
CONSENSUS ON THE NEED FOR AN INTERNATIONAL TEA AGREE-
MENT. AS NOTED IN REF A THIS RESULT WAS NOT ENTIRELY
UNEXPECTED; ALTHOUGH PERHAPS IT DID SERVE TO UNDERLINE
OBSTACLES MORE THAN ANTICIPATED. ACCORDING TO MINISTRY
OF AGRICULTURE SOURCES, THE HOSTILITY OF EAST AFRICANS
TO AN AGREEMENT -- PARTICULARLY KENYA -- WAS NOTABLE.

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KENYA REPORTEDLY IS CLOSE TO EXPANSION LIMITS IN

ACREAGE TERMS, BUT STILL LOOKS FORWARD TO PRODUCTION AND PRODUCTIVITY EXPANSION, SO IT DOES NOT WISH TO GET LOCKED IN WITH A QUOTA SYSTEM AT THIS TIME. KENYA EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF SMALL HOLDERS PARTICULARLY IN ITS TEA DEVELOPMENT PLANS. THE MOST DISAPPOINTED PRODUCER WAS CLEARLY SRI LANKA, WHILE INDIA PLAYED ITS CARDS CLOSE TO CHEST, WITHOUT REVEALING WHETHER IT REALLY DESIRES OR DOES NOT DESIRE AN AGREEMENT AT THIS TIME.

2. WHILE THE UK WAS UNABLE TO GET BACKING FOR ITS DRAFT INTERNATIONAL TEA AGREEMENT AT THE MEETING, IT INTENDS TO PRESENT THE DRAFT TO THE FORTHCOMING FAO MEETING IN ROME. PAPER IS NOW BEING SLIGHTLY REWORKED BUT WILL REMAIN ESSENTIALLY AS WAS, I.O., A "QUOTA STANDBY" SYSTEM BASED ON THE NEW INTERNATIONAL COFFEE AGREEMENT (SOURCE SAID WITH TODAY'S PRICES, EAST AFRICAN PRODUCERS ARE FINDING TEA ALMOST "EMBARRASSINGLY PROFITABLE").

3. WE HAVE BEEN PROMISED COPY OF UK DRAFT AND WILL POUCH SOONEST. WE ARE ALSO POUCHING TO PILKAUSKAS, EB/TRP, CLIPPING FROM THE MARCH 17 FINANCIAL TIMES.

ARMSTRONG

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Message Attributes

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